FROM THE CREATOR OF DEAD@17

DDP

4 FEB $3.25

BLACK HARVEST

by JOSH HOWARD

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Lettered by STEVE SEELEY

Daniel and Zaya's viewing of the Jericho Lights was interrupted by Sheriff Banks. Zaya fled and was pursued by the sheriff, who was stopped dead in his tracks by the Lights themselves, leaving him with severe burns. Meanwhile, Dr. Edwards reluctantly turned over his daughter to the secretive City Council, who need her for some unknown purpose. Daniel searches for the now missing Zaya only to discover something strange buried in the sand: an old sign for a military installation...

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HURRY!
WAIT, DAD!
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO EXPLAIN. JUST TRUST ME. I'M TAKING YOU SOMEWHERE SAFE.
SAFE? SAFE FROM WHAT?
JUST TRUST ME, ZAYA!
WE'RE BEING FOLLOWED.
FOLLOWED? BY WHO?

THEM.
DAD, LOOK OUT!
I SEE IT!
SCREEECH!
DAD, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? IS THAT A GUN?
WHERE YOU HEADED, MR. VAHN?
DAD!

PUT IT AWAY, MR. VAHN. WE CAN DO THIS PEACEFULLY.
I WILL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO PROTECT MY FAMILY. NOW BACK OFF!
DAD! BEHIND YOU!
THONK!
AAAAAHH!
NO!!
GET...
KRAK!
...OFF!!
AAAAAHHH!

KONK!
OH, WELL. NO ONE SAID WE HAD TO BRING HER BACK IN ONE PIECE.
DUDE...WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WE GOTTA GET GOING.
DON'T WORRY. YOU'LL GET YOUR TURN.
HEH. AIN'T NEVER HAD A GOTH CHICK BEFORE.

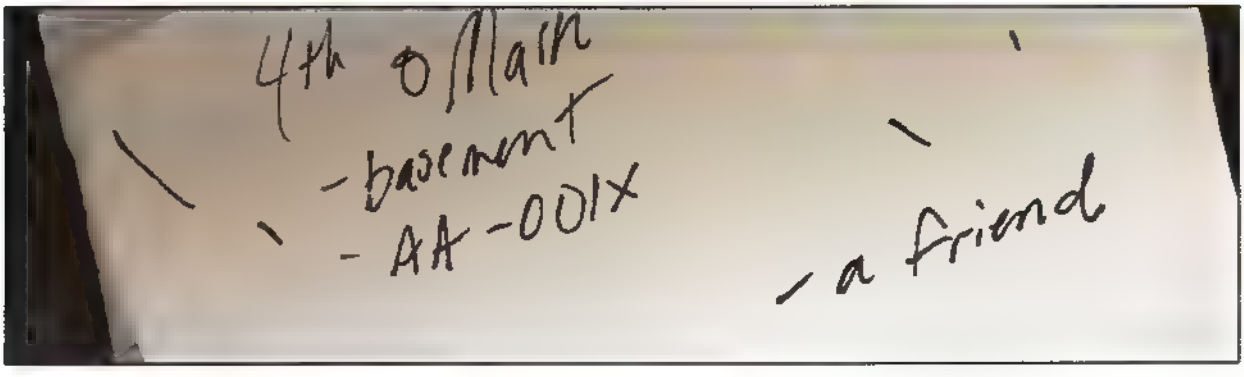
WHAT THE HELL?
GET THOSE LIGHTS OUTTA MY--
SSZZZZZZZ!
OH, GOD! WHAT THE HELL...
SSZZZZZZZ!
AAAAHHH! OH GOD!!! IT BURNS!
AAAAAAHHHH!
SSZZZZZZZ!

NOOO!!

1-14-02
Morrow, Franks, Hamilton
11/19/05
Gorel, Reinmuth, Kryfko
Kelly Thompson 11/19/05
KNOCK
KNOCK
COME IN.
Kentucky Straight
BOURBON
WHISKEY
IS IT TRUE?
BANKS
GOOD EVENING TO YOU, TOO, MAYOR.

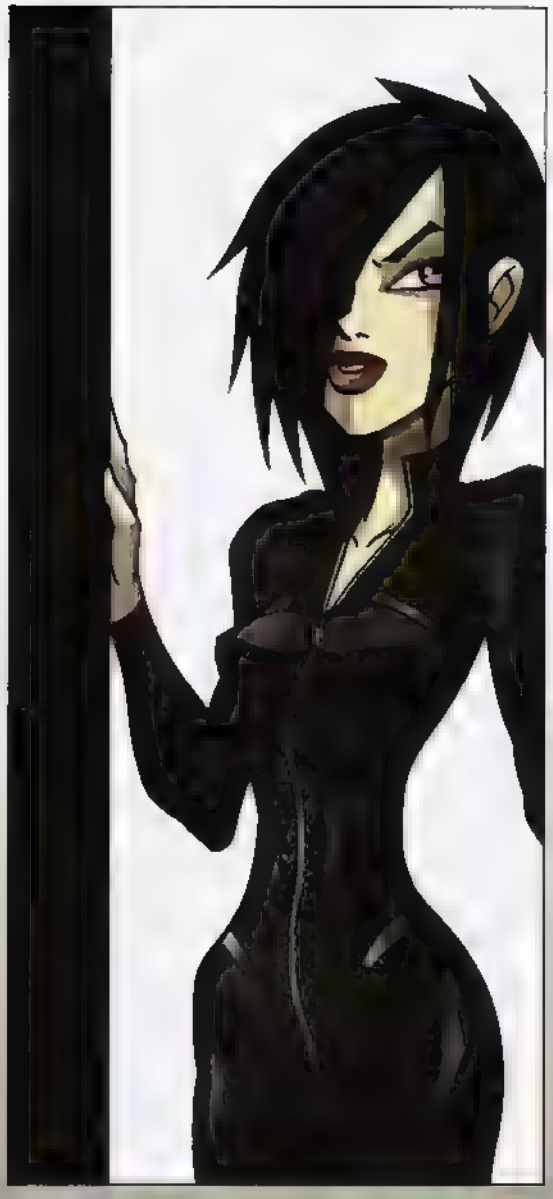
DON'T SCREW AROUND WITH ME. WHERE IS SHE? WHERE'S ZAYA?
YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE.
I'M NOT IN THE MOOD, BILL! YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE KEEPING AN EYE ON HER!
IS THAT IN ADDITION TO BOTCHING INVESTIGATIONS, LOOKING THE OTHER WAY ON THE BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL, AND PINNING CRIMES ON UNSUSPECTING OUT-OF-TOWNERS?
I MADE YOU, BILL. DON'T FORGET THAT. OR WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO BACK TO BEING THE TOWN DRUNK?
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT. FIND HER!
SLAM!
KA-KLANG!

...FOR THE FIRST TIME IN RECORDED HISTORY, THE JERICHO LIGHTS HAVE MYSTERIOUSLY VANISHED BEFORE THEIR USUAL 6 DAY VISITATION.
THE CAUSE REMAINS UNKNOWN, BUT THAT HASN'T STOPPED RAMPANT SPECULATION AMONG THE COMMUNITY.
LIVE10


4th & Main
- basement
- AA-001x
- a friend

THIS IS A MAJOR SETBACK. THE ENTIRE OPERATION IS IN JEOPARDY NOW.
WE DON'T KNOW THAT.
SOMETHING'S WRONG OR THEY WOULDN'T HAVE RETURNED HER TO US.
PERHAPS. OR MAYBE WE OVERLOOKED SOMETHING.
WHERE'S MY FATHER?! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH HIM?

PROTOCOL GAMMA 26.
HZZZZ
SORRY I HAD TO DO THAT, ZAYA, BUT THERE'S NO NEED FOR HOSTIL TIES--WE ARE NOT YOUR ENEMY.
HERE'S SOMETHING FOR YOU TO WEAR.
GET DRESSED AND MEET ME OUTSIDE.
THEN I WILL GLADLY ANSWER ALL YOUR QUESTIONS.



PLEASE, SIT DOWN.

HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
WHERE'S MY FATHER?
I'LL GET TO THAT. BUT FIRST, YOUR MEMORIES. WHAT'S THE LAST THING YOU REMEMBER?
PLEASE, I WANT TO HELP YOU. BUT I FIRST NEED TO KNOW WHAT YOU REMEMBER.
I REMEMBER... THREE MEN, THERE WAS A FIGHT.
DAD WAS HURT, AND THEN LIGHTS... AND...
YOU WERE INJURED.

WHEN YOU ARRIVED HERE, YOU WERE CLINICALLY BRAIN DEAD. THE FACT THAT YOU ARE SITTING HERE NOW, SPEAKING TO ME... REMEMBERING, IS...WELL, A MIRACLE.
WHAT DO YOU GOT FOR ME?
WELL, YOU WERE RIGHT. THERE WAS A MILITARY BASE OUTSIDE JERICHO, BUT IT WAS SHUT DOWN SEVERAL YEARS AGO BECAUSE OF PROTESTS FROM THE TOWNSPEOPLE.
Helen Canton Leads Campaign to Close Area Base
SOME WOMAN NAMED HELEN CANTON WAS ABLE TO PRESSURE THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.
CANTON'S THE MAYOR NOW.
IT GETS BETTER. CANTON'S RIGHT HAND MAN-- WHO WAS AIDING HER IN GETTING THE BASE SHUT DOWN--WAS... ARE YOU READY FOR THIS?
THOMAS VAHN...
BINGO.
MY GOD, HOW YOU DO IT?
C'MON, DANIEL... IT'S ME WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.
JESSICA... YOU'RE AMAZING.
I KNOW. SO, YOU GONNA TELL ME NOW WHAT THIS ALL MEANS?
4th St
Main
I CAN'T.
WHY NOT?
WELL, MAINLY BECAUSE I REALLY DON'T KNOW YET. BUT I'M GETTING CLOSER.

ALRIGHT, BUT YOU PROMISE ME YOU'RE OKAY?
PROMISE.
OKAY. JUST HURRY BACK. I...I'VE BEEN DOING A LOT OF THINKING LATELY. ABOUT *THINGS*.
WHAT KIND OF *THINGS*?
YOU KNOW...US. YOU EVER TH NK THAT MAYBE IF WE HAD TR ED A LITTLE HARDER WE COULD'VE MADE IT WORK?
WHERE S THIS COM NG FROM? I THOUGHT WE HAD THIS FIGURED OUT.
I KNOW. I JUST THOUGHT--
LISTEN, I'D REALLY LIKE TO TALK, I *REALLY* WOULD. BUT I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO WORK. I'LL CALL YOU TOMORROW, OKAY?
ALRIGHT. *FINE.*
JERICHO PUBLIC LIBRARY
READ!

WHERE'S MY FATHER?
ZAYA... THE INCIDENT YOU REMEMBER, IT HAPPENED THREE YEARS AGO. YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER WERE BOTH KILLED BY THE ONES WE'RE FIGHTING AGAINST. YOUR FATHER WAS WORKING FOR US, TRYING TO GET CLOSE TO JERICHO'S INNER CIRCLE.
HE WAS FOUND OUT AND WAS ATTEMPTING TO DELIVER YOU TO US IN ORDER TO PROTECT YOU. I'M SORRY... YOUR FATHER WAS A GOOD MAN.
WHO ARE YOU?
WE ARE *PROJECT JOSHUA*. WE WERE ONCE A TOP SECRET BRANCH OF THE U.S. MILITARY, OPERATING OUT OF A LOCAL BASE, BUT NOW WE'RE AN AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATION. WHEN AREA 49 WAS SHUT DOWN, WE MOVED UNDERGROUND TO CONTINUE OUR RESEARCH.
RESEARCH? INTO WHAT?
WHAT'S DOWN THERE?
WE'RE NOT ENTIRELY SURE. WHAT WE DO KNOW IS THAT THAT IS WHERE *THEY* COME FROM.
YOU MEAN... THE LIGHTS?
CORRECT. THEY'RE NOT *EXTRA*TERRESTRIAL, BUT *INTRA*TERRESTRIAL.

WHAT... WHAT ARE THEY?
THEIR TRUE NATURE IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR, BUT THEY CALL THEMSELVES THE HARVESTERS. WE'VE BEEN COMMUNICATING WITH THEM FOR YEARS. THEY'VE PROVIDED US WITH COUNTLESS ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC THEORY.
BUT THEY'RE DAMNED MYSTERIOUS AND NOT TOO OPEN TO ANSWERING QUESTIONS. THEY ARE ALLIES, AT LEAST FOR NOW. IF IT WASN'T FOR THEM, YOU MIGHT NOT BE HERE RIGHT NOW.
WHY ARE THEY DOING ALL THIS? WHAT IS IT THEY WANT?
YOU.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THE HARVESTERS SEEM TO BE INTERESTED IN ONLY ONE THING-- JERICHO.
ACCORDING TO THEM, THERE IS SOMETHING EVIL AT WORK THERE. TRUE EVIL. THEIR OBJECTIVE IS TO ERADICATE IT.
IF THEY'RE SO POWERFUL, WHY DON'T THEY JUST DO IT THEMSELVES? WHY DO THEY NEED YOUR HELP?
THAT'S ONE OF THOSE QUESTIONS THEY DON'T LIKE ANSWERING.
BUT FOR WHATEVER REASON, WE BELIEVE THEY ARE NOT ABLE TO ENTER THE CITY LIMITS. THEY BEEN PATIENTLY WATCHING... WAITING... FOR THE PERFECT VESSEL TO DELIVER THEIR JUDGMENT.
ME?

YOU PROVIDED THEM WITH A BLANK SLATE--THE PERFECT EMPTY SHELL TO CONTAIN THEIR PROGRAMMING.
PROGRAMMING?
YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND... YOU WERE BRAIN DEAD... A VEGETABLE. THERE WAS LITTLE HOPE FOR RECOVERY. THE ONLY OTHER OPTION WAS TO WATCH YOU WITHER AND DIE!
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I DIDN'T WANT TO DIE? WHY WOULD I WANT TO BE USED LIKE A MINDLESS ROBOT?!
WE NEVER COUNTED ON YOUR ORIGINAL MEMORIES RESURFACING. THEY BEGAN TO CONFLICT WITH THE PROGRAM. LUCKILY, THE SAFETY PROTOCOLS REMAINED INTACT AND DIRECTED YOU TO RETURN TO US.
SO, IN OTHER WORDS, AS LONG AS I NEVER REMEMBERED, YOUR CONSCIENCE WAS CLEAR. YOU THOUGHT YOUR LITTLE SIN WAS GOING TO REMAIN A SECRET!
SIN? HUNDREDS OF INNOCENT LIVES HAVE BEEN SACRIFICED AT THE ALTAR OF CONVENIENCE IN JERICHO! AND AMONG THOSE, THE LIVES OF YOUR OWN TWO PARENTS. AND YOU WOULD'VE BEEN RIGHT THERE ALONG WITH THEM HADN'T IT BEEN FOR US. YOUR FATHER WAS ONE OF US... HE BELIEVED IN WHAT WE WERE DOING!
I DON'T WANT ANY PART OF THIS... I WILL NOT BE A PAWN!
SIR! COMMUNICATIONS HAVE BEEN RE-ESTABLISHED! THEY'RE RETURNING!

ZZZZZ
AAAAAAHHH!

ZAYA... ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
JUDGMENT IS HERE
SGAKS
I... AM NOT... YOUR ENEMY!
JUDGMENT COMES FOR ALL MEN. NO ONE IS RIGHTEOUS... NO ONE. ONE DAY IT WILL BE YOUR TIME.
BUT NOT TODAY.
TO BE CONTINUED...

PIN-UP BY BENJAMIN HALL

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WITH THE JUDGMENT OF THE HARVESTERS IMMINENT,
DANIEL MAY HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THEM –
BUT WILL HE?
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